

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments, and the following remarks. Claims 15-16, 18-19, 22 and 25 are in the application. Claim 25 has been amended. Claims 20, 21 and 23 have been canceled. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner rejected claims 15-25 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 8-90481 in view of GB 2 118 524 and further in view of EP 0 352 576 A2. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Applicants have amended claim 25 to incorporate the elements of claims 20, 21 and 23, now canceled. Claim 25 now claims that there are several projections on the external ring and on the supporting surface, respectively, for punctual contact on the housing and that the projections are connected with the contacting or switching elements, so that a better switching behavior of the switch-off box can be obtained.

The description of the present patent application reads on
p. 6:

"In order to ensure a punctual abutment or contact on the housing 33, projections 41 are arranged on the external ring 40 so as to ensure punctual bearing on the housing 33. The entire coupling means 34 is resiliently mounted so as to cause the suitable displacement of the coupling means 34 at a collision of the connected parts and, in particular, the torch body 28 with a solid object. In order for this to be detected, contacting elements or switching elements are connected with the projections 41 and the supporting surface 39, respectively, in a manner that the contacting element will be activated or deactivated by the lifting of a single projection 41 from the housing 33 and a signal will, thus, be transmitted from the contacting element or switching element to an interfaced control device 4, or the robot system."

The Japanese reference JP 8-90481 A shows a switching element (11) arranged on a sleeve (25) which can be moved against

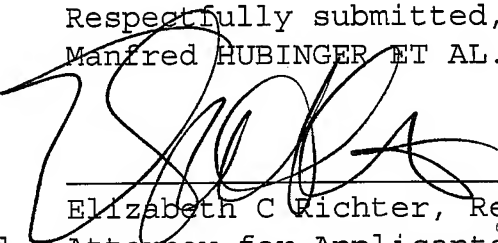
the force of a spring (28) as can be seen from Fig. 3 of the Japanese reference. In case of a collision of the welding torch (4), the sleeve (25) will be moved and the switch (11) will be opened and therefore a collision will be detected. Beside the welding torch (4) also the sleeve (25) must be moved to activate the switch (11).

According to the present patent application, the switching elements are integrated in the switch-off box since the projections arranged on the external ring and on the supporting surface, respectively, are connected with the switching elements. This differentiates the present invention from the state of the art and results in a better switching behavior of the switch-off box.

Accordingly, Applicants submits that claim 25 as amended, is patentable over the cited references, taken either singly or in combination. Claims 15-16, 18-19, and 22 depend from claim 25 are therefore believed to be patentable as well. Early allowance of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosure: RCE Transmittal

ECR:cmm

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being filed
June 24, 2008.



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